

*The Principles and Practice of Moderate
Nonconformists with Respect to
Ordination, Exemplify'd*

by

Edmund Calamy



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*The PRINCIPLES and PRACTICE of Moderate
NONCONFORMISTS with Respect to
ORDINATION, Exemplify'd:*

In a

S E R M O N

Preach'd at the

ORDINATION

OF

Mr. John Munckley,

January the 19th. 1717.

AND

A CHARGE given to *Mr. JAMES READ,*
Mr. HENRY READ, Mr. RICHARD BISCOE,
Mr. GEORGE SMYTH, and Mr. S. CHANDLER,
after their being Ordain'd, *Dec. 19th. 1716,*

To which is Added,

A LETTER to a DIVINE in *Germany* giving a
Brief but True Account of the *PROTESTANT*
DISSENTERS in *England.*

By EDMUND CALAMY, *D.D.*

The Second Edition.

LONDON:

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TO

RICHARD ELLYS, ESQ;

SIR,



SHOULD not have presum'd to have inscrib'd Your Name to what is here published, but that I had Reason to believe, the Principles I advanc'd were agreeable to Your own Sentiments, and was satisfy'd, that the Case of *Protestant Dissenters*, is here set on that very Foot, on which You are not asham'd by

As

your

Your stated Practice, to declare your Concurrence with them.

AND could but a Number of Gentlemen, well-descended, and of good Estates, be prevail'd with, quitting their immoderate Diversions (which yield no Comfort upon a Review) to enquire as closely as you have done into Matters of Religion, being open to Light, and earnestly desirous of the powerful Influences of Divine Grace, (which we all so much need in our fallen State) I am persuaded Things would soon put on a better Face among us, and serious Piety would not be so easily put out of Countenance.

THO' in the Course you have taken, you have not the Concurrence

rence of many of your own Rank yet you have the much greater Pleasure of a good Conscience, which is a continual Feast, and will help to Hand unmov'd as a Rock, in as changeable and certain a World as this, even by, those Things which to Nature are most shocking and disheartning.

MAY you go on to adorn Religion, by your constant Attendance on Divine Worship, exemplary Family Order, Readiness to do Good, Zeal for Truth and Purity, Self-denial, and undisguis'd Humility; and find by Experience, that *Godliness is profitable unto all Things, having Promise of the Life that now is, and of that which is to come.*

I CAN most heartily say to you, Sir, as St. *John* to *Gaius*, for whom he had a particular Respect and Honour, *I wish above all Things, that you may prosper, and be in Health, even as your Soul prospereth.* Devout Addresses in order to it, to the FATHER of Mercies, are not wanting, on the Part of

SIR,

Your much oblig'd,

And

Most Obedient Servant.

EDMUND CALAMY.

Westminster,
Feb. 14.
1716/17.

THE
PREFACE.

THE SERMON and CHARGE here Publish'd, were deliver'd upon two very, solemn Occasions, and met with such Acceptance, as encourages me to hope, they may be of more general Use. I don't but they may help to convince some, That we that think ourselves oblig'd to Dissent from the National Church Establishment, (tho' none go beyond us in Zeal for the State) are far from encouraging rash and illiterate Intruders into the Sacred Ministry; and to satisfy others, that neither our Principles nor our Tempers are rightly understood, by those that give themselves a Liberty to inveigh against us.

LET the World, from hence judge, whether we deserve the Insults of such a Writer, as the Author of *The Invalidity of the Dissenting Ministry?* And whether when such Persons as those immediately concern'd in these Discourses, are Ordain'd among us, there

there be any such pressing Occasion to commiserate the Misfortune of those train'd up in private Academies, as he out of Abundance (no doubt) of his Compassion, seems willing to insinuate?

THE LETTER, that is subjoyn'd, gives a true Account of us, as to our Rise and Sentiments, Views, and Hardships. It was drawn up at the particular Request of an Ingenious Young German Divine, who in the Course of his Travels spent some Time in this Island, Convers'd freely, as Opportunity offer'd, with Persons of all Characters and Denominations, and often heard the Dissenters spoken of with great Contempt and disdain. As he and some others that were Foreigners were satisfy'd by this Account, that we were basely injur'd; so has it been the Apprehension of several that have seen it, that we have not a Few among our own Countrymen, who having unhappily taken their Notions of us from such as (either through Ignorance or Design), misrepresented us, may from hence have several of their Mistakes rectify'd, if they are but willing to be undeceiv'd: And it is the Hope of contributing to this, that is the true Reason of its being now made publick.

ACTS

ACTS XX. 28.

Take Heed therefore unto yourselves, and to all the Flock, over the which the Holy Ghost hath made you Overseers; to feed the Church of God, which He hath purchased with his own Blood.



THESE are the Words of St. *Paul*, spoken to Gospel Ministers with great Warmth and Seriousness and they well deserve to be attended to and consider'd, both by Ministers and People. It has been much debated, What Sort of Ministers they were spoken to. As to which we may observe, that in Verse 17. of this Chapter they are describ'd as *Elders of the Church*. The Apostle sent for them from *Ephesus* to *Miletus*, that he might have an Opportunity of giving them this Exhortation. Some have apprehended, that these Elders were all of them *superior Bishops* that had

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Presbyters under them; and others, that they were mere *Presbyters* and Pastors of particular Flocks, that had none but *Apostles* and *Evangelists* above them, some think, they were the *Elders* of all the Churches in that Neighbourhood; and others, that they were only, or chiefly, the *Elders* of the particular church of *Ephesus*. But without entering on the Particulars of this Debate, or staying to canvass the Reasons that are alledg'd on each Side I shall only desire you to observe, That the Elders that are here address'd to, were such as had the Oversight of the Flock, and of all the Flock, and who were *made Overseers* of it *by the Holy Ghost*; and who had no more to oversee, than they were able to feed, take care of, and account for: Which to me makes it plain, That they were such as St. *Paul* order'd *Titus* to *ordain in every city*. Such Elders as these, does the Apostle here freely exhort to discharge their Duty, with the utmost Fidelity and Care.

Acts xiv.
 23
 Tit. i. 5.

HE gives them a double Admonition.

1. HE charges them to *take Heed to themselves*; which if they did not do with great Concern and Care, he could have but very little Hope they would take due Heed to those of whom they were made *Overseers*. And

2. HE also recommends to them the Care of all the Flock. And this latter Admonition, he inforces with a fourfold Consideration. For,

1. HE puts them in mind, That they were by Office *Overseers of the Flock*, and so could neither answer their Name, nor be true to their Trust, if they did not *take Heed to all the Flock* that was under their Oversight.

2. HE recommends it to their Thoughts, That it was the Holy Ghost that had *made them Overseers of the Flock*; and leaves them to Inferred, how unfaithful they would be to Him that employ'd 'em, and how much He would resent it, if they did not *take Heed* to those whom He had committed to their Oversight.

3. HE intimates to them, That *the Flock* to which they were to *take Heed*, was *the Church of God*: made up of Persons whom the Blessed GOD had gather'd to Himself out of a sinful apostate World, to make them Partakers of his special Favours, in the Way of the Gospel. And,

4. He

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4. HE farther signifies to 'em, That this *Flock*, this *Church*, to which they were to *take Heed*, and of which the *Holy Ghost* Himself had *made them Overseers*, was *purchas'd by God*, i. e. by Him that was God as well as Man, *with his own Blood*: And so he insinuates, That since GOD Himself discover'd so great a Value for his Flock and Church, it would little become them by their Neglect of it, to shew they made light of it, and despis'd and undervalu'd it.

THESE are all of them very moving Thoughts, tho' hardly capable of being consider'd distinctly in a single Discourse. I shall therefore satisfy myself with endeavouring to represent the Obligation which all Gospel Ministers are under, *to take Heed unto themselves, and to all the Flock*, from their being *Overseers* or *Bishops* of it, (for so the Word $\epsilon\pi\sigma\kappa\omicron\upsilon\varsigma$, might and should be render'd) and *made such by the Holy Ghost*. And even this will appear more than sufficient for the Limits I am confin'd to, by that time I have gone over these Six Propositions that here very naturally offer themselves to our Consideration.

- I. THAT the Flock of Christ needs *Overseers*.
- II. THAT none have a real Right to be *Overseers of the Flock* of Christ, but those that are *made such by the Holy Ghost*.
- III. THAT they whom *the Holy Ghost makes Overseers of the Flock*, are true and proper *Bishops*.
- IV. THAT they whom *the Holy Ghost* has most evidently *made Overseers of Flock*, need to be admonish'd of their Duty, and stirr'd up to put it in practise.
- V. THAT it is the indispensable Duty of those whom *the Holy Ghost has made Overseers of the Flock, to take Heed to themselves*. And,
- VI. *Lastly*, THAT it is also their plain Duty to *take Heed to all the Flock* without Exception.

THESE Points I shall go severally over in the Order in which I have propos'd them.

⁴ I. *Prop.* THE Flock of Christ needs *Overseers*. He indeed that has purchas'd it, has the Oversight of it, and absolutely speaking, cannot be said to be ty'd to the Use of inferior Inspectors: And yet finding both in Nature and in Grace, that GOD has all along thought fit to use Instruments under Himself, it little becomes us to pretend they are needless. We are not to imagine the Flock would cease to be, or cease to be Christ's Flock, and under his Care, if it had not *Overseers* pick'd out from among themselves, to *take Heed* to it: And yet we may safely say, it would in that Case, as Circumstances stand, labour under great Disadvantages, to what it does according to the present Settlement. The Flock does not so need such *Overseers*, as they are to whose Care the Holy Ghost has ordinarily committed it, as that any that are truly united to Christ by Faith and Love, would not belong to his Flock, or be Members of his Body, if they were not under their Oversight, when they could not have it, and knew not how to obtain their Help, That; is a Supposition would carry the Necessity much too far; and farther in my Apprehension than could be justify'd: In such a Case, we may very well conclude, that Christ himself would take Care of such as belong'd to his Flock, and the blessed Spirit would supply the Place of inferior *Overseers*, by his own immediate Agency, Inspection, and Influence: And yet ordinarily speaking, we have Reason enough to say, that the Flock of Christ stands in such Need of the *Overseers*, which the Holy Ghost has provided, as that it would be much expos'd without them.

1 Pet. v. 4.

CHRIST Himself must be own'd *the Chief Shepherd*, as his Apostle has expresly styl'd Him. He neither can nor will be wanting to his Flock. Whatsoever they want in a Shepherd is to be found in Him, and that in the utmost Perfection: And He is always the same, and never dies. Without his Warrant none have any thing to do with his Flock; and without his Blessing, no Endeavours of others to *take Heed* to them, could do them any Service: And yet if Circumstances be consider'd, there will appear great Need of inferior Shepherds, to act in subordination to Him, by his Commission, and under his Direction: And were there not such, the Flock would be unhappily expos'd.

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⁵ 'TIS not the least Reflexion on the chief Shepherd, to say, that Under-Shepherds are needful in their Place. For what they do, He does by them; and what He does by 'em, He could have done without 'em, had He thought good. And yet he having thought fit to act by them, and with them, we must say they are of great Use, considering his Personal Distance, in the Upper-World, where his Presence is necessary, to secure the great and blessed Ends of his Mediation. He has indeed promis'd to be with his Flock *to the End of the World*; but that is by being with those that have the Oversight of them, in their Ministrations, if they are favour'd with such; or by Supplying 'em with the immediate Influences of his Spirit, without their Help, if it cannot be had. And had He ordinarily none to take Care of them in his Absence, they'd in a Manner have been left destitute: They'd have wretchedly wander'd among Rocks and Precipices, and have been in Danger of being starv'd with Hunger, and devour'd by Wolves. He acts the Part of a good and kind Shepherd to them, in providing 'em with suitable Under-Shepherds to feed and oversee them. So that these Overseers of the Flock, are so far from being oppos'd to the Chief Shepherd, and the supposing them needful, is so far from charging Him with Negligence, that his giving 'em such, to act under Himself in conducting them, is a great Instance, and Mark, and Fruit, of His Care of them.

NOR is it a breaking in upon *Christian Liberty*, to suppose Ministers to be ordinarily necessary in the Christian Church. They may discharge the Whole of their Duty in *taking Heed to the Flock*, and yet the several Members of it may enjoy all that Liberty that our Lord has left them, and the Use of which could reasonably be suppos'd to be either for his Honour, or their Benefit. And to desire any more, would be irregular, and unjustifiable.

WE are not its true under *Tutors* now, as they were under the Law. St. Paul disclaims it. We are not now treated like Minors, in a rough or authoritative Way; no Rigor is to be us'd towards us: And yet our being under the Care of *Overseers*, who *take Heed to all the Flock*, under the superior Direction of the Great Shepherd, is very confident with our advanced Age, and much every Way for our Advantage.

Gal. iv. 2,
3.

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 OUR Lord Jesus Christ would nor have provided such *Overseers*, if he had not thought 'em needful and advantageous He would not have *given* to his Church, *Pastors and Teachers*, as well as *Apostles, Prophets and Evangelists*, had they not been requisite, for *the perfecting of the Saints*, and the edifying his Body, and the growth of his Servants, and the keeping them from being *tossed to and fro*', and *carried about with every Wind of Doctrine*, as the Apostle in so many Words declares. And indeed hardly any Thing is more evident, than the Need the Flock of GOD stands in of some to oversee it, and take the Charge of it. They need it in order to their being fed, and guarded, and kept in Order and Regularity. The Flock of Christ must be fed with Knowledge and Understanding; not with Tares, but good Wheat; not with Shadows and Ceremonies, but substantial Truths. It must be guarded from *grievous Wolves*, which often *enter in, not sparing the Flock*. The several Institutions also which our Lord has fix'd for the Benefit of his Church must be administred amongst them as He has order'd. And of this Work is to be done, there must be some to do it, some whose proper Work it must be to take Care of it, or else there will be no small Danger of its being left undone; in as much as we commonly see, that what is every One's Business, is minded, by no One; because no Man thinks himself oblig'd to take Care on't. There is a Need of Ministers, as the Apostle intimates in the Text, *to feed the Church of God*, and to have the Inspection of particular Worshipping Societies; to preserve them from Ignorance and Error and from being seduc'd, by such as often *arise among themselves speaking perverse Things, to draw away the Disciples after them*; and from an almost infinite number of Disorders that would be apt to creep in. They are needful, to administer divine Offices in an orderly Manner, according to the Rule of the Word; and to transmit the Gospel Doctrine and Institutions safe, to succeeding Ages and Generations. They that reckon the Ministerial Office needless, not only despise our Lord's Kindness in fixing it, but discover a great Insensibleness of the Wants of the Church, and an Unconcernedness whether or no there be any suitable Provision made for them: And they that despise the *Overseers* which Christ has provided for his Flock, whatever they may imagine, will at last be found

Eph. iv.
 II, &c.

Acts xx.
 29.

⁷ found to despise Christ Himself, and be treated accordingly.

II. *Prop* NONE have a real Right to be *Overseers of the Flock* of Christ, but those that are *made such by the Holy Ghost*. Others may pretend a Right, without ever being able to make it good. But where the Holy Ghost makes *Overseers*, the Right is real, and the Duty plain. 'Twas He made the Elders spoken to in the Text, so many *Overseers of the Flock*, and therefore it was their unquestionable Duty to *take Heed* to it: If they had not they had not been true to their Trust, nor faithful in that Office, in which they were so remarkably fix'd: But I cannot see how it can be charg'd on any One as a Duty to *take Heed to the Flock*, no nor how it can be excus'd from Sin to attempt it, where the Holy Ghost has committed no Oversight. His Concern in this Case is necessary. He acts as our blessed Saviour's Deputy in his Church, and 'tis one and a main part of his Office, to provide the Flock with *Overseers*, and to fit them for that great Work, incline 'em to it, invest them in their Office, give them an Opportunity for the Exercise of it, and to assist and succeed them in the Whole of their Service.

AND *this being a Matter* of no small Consequence, I shall here give myself Scope distinctly to consider,

1. HOW the *Holy Ghost made Overseers of the Flock* at the first Spreading of Christianity.

2. HOW He has done it in the Ages that have since run out, and does it still.

3. HOW Men may know that the *Holy Ghost makes them Overseers of the Flock*; and how others may be so far satisfy'd of this, as rationally to acquiesce in their Oversight, without having Occasion to be disturb'd with the Clamours of People of different Sentiments.

4. WHAT we must say to the ministerial Acts of such as are not made *Overseers of the Flock by the Holy Ghost*. And,

5. THE Insignificancy of other Things to make Men *Overseers of the Flock*, if the Agency of the *Holy Ghost*, who alone can truly make Men such, is wanting.

I. THEN

I. THEN, Lee us see, how *the Holy Ghost made Overseers of the Flock* at the first spreading of Christianity. The publishing the Everlasting Gospel, and taking the Charge of a number of Profesing Christians, and keeping up all Ordinances among them, was then reckon'd one of the greatest Works a Man could ingage in. The Holy Ghost at that Time openly concern'd Himself in this Matter. Men did not go forth to preach of their own Heads, or meerly at the Persuasion of well-meaning Persons that had a good Opinion of them, but as sent of the Holy Ghost. Thus we read, that when *certain Prophets and Teachers* that were in *thy Church at Antioch, ministred to the Lord, and fasted, the Holy Ghost said, Separate unto me Barnabas and Saul, for the Work whereunto I have called them:* and they did so: And then 'tis added, *That they were sent forth by the Holy Ghost.* And as to those *Elders of Ephesus*, who are spoken to in my Text, *the Holy Ghost made them Overseers of the Flock*, by his own special Direction, and the Extraordinary Gifts with which he furnish'd them. For we read, that at *St. Paul's* first coming to *Ephesus*, he *having laid his Hands, upon twelve Men, the Holy Ghost fell on them, and they spake with Tongues, and Prophesied.* By thus distinguishing them, the Holy Ghost, as it were, set them apart for *Overseers* of others. He this way set his Mark upon them, as Persons whom he design'd for the sacred Ministry. And therefore, among other Gifts which were common in the Primitive Church, several of which are reckon'd up at once by *St. Paul*, one that he mentions is *the Discerning of Spirits*; by which I apprehend is meant, not only a Capacity of satisfactorily Discerning, whether Men pretending to the Spirit spake from God or no? But also a Judgment to discern the Spirits of Men, so as to see their Qualifications for the sacred Ministry; upon which they were chosen, and fix'd on for that Work and Office. This was very common, at the first Rise of Christianity. We have several Hints that look that Way in the Writings of the New Testament. Thus *Timothy* that was made a special Minister, and was exceeding serviceable in spreading of the Gospel, had *Prophecies that went before, concerning him*; and is said, to have had a *Gift given him by Prophecy, with the laying on of the hands of the Prresbytery.* From which, two Hints, it seems plain that *Timothy* was ordain'd, by the express Appointment of some Servants of GOD who could discern Spirits, and were able to

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Acts. xiii.
1, 2.
ver. 4.

Acts. xix.
6, 7.

1 Cor. xii.
8, &c.

1 Tim. i.
18.
— iv. 4.

⁹foretel, how eminently useful he would be in that Capacity; and its not unlikely, but that had it not been for Something of this Nature, St. *Paul* and his Brethren might have been afraid of calling *Timothy* to so high an Office as that of an Evangelist, while he was so very young.

AND if we'll take the Pains to Consult the Writers who first succeeded in the Christian Church, after the *New Testament* was finish'd, we may meet with several Passages to the same Purpose. Thus St. *Clement* in his Epistle to the *Corinthians*, (which the Canonical Scriptures alone being excepted, is the most ancient Piece of Christianity we have remaining,) tells us, That * *the Apostles Preaching about in Countries and Cities, constituted their First-fruits for Bishops and Deacons over those who should believe, when they had try'd them by the Spirit.* And *Clement of Alexandria*, † says, that St. *John* ordain'd those to be of the Clergy, that to him *by the Spirit.* And indeed, which Way could the Holy Ghost better signify his Mind, that such and such Persons as He pitch'd upon should be Overseers of the Block, than by enabling some to discern their Fitness, and conferring on them such extraordinary Gifts, as were suitable to the extraordinary Circumstances they were then in. However, nothing can be plainer, than that the Agency of the Holy Ghost was then very visible and conspicuous. But,

2. LET us now see what Hand the Holy Ghost has had in *making Men Overseers of the Flock*, in the Ages that have since run-out; and how He does it still. This extraordinary Agency of his I have been mentioning, did not last long. It ceas'd by Degrees, as the Church came to be settled: And yet we have no Reason to imagine, that the blessed Spirit hereupon withdrew either his Presence or Influence, or ceas'd to have a Concern for the Church and a Ministry in it. But He has from Time to Time, inclin'd some to the Office of the sacred Ministry, He has qualify'd them for it, and call'd them forth to it, and given them an Opportunity for the Exercise of it, which was as much as could be expected from Him, in order to the making Persons Overseers of the Flock. And thus much He does to this very Day.

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I. HE

* *Vid. Cottelerii. Pat. Ap* Vol. I. pag. 170.

† *Euseb. Hist. Eccles. Lib, III. cap. xxiii.*

10

1. HE has from Time to Time inclin'd some to the Office of the Ministry, to make Choice of it for the Business of their Lives. And when He inclin'd Persons to make choice of this Service, at a Time when they might easily foresee they must this Way necessarily come to stand in the Front of the Battle against Pagan Persecutors, and be the chief Butts of their Rage and Malice, and run the Hazard of Life, and Liberty, and all that could be dear to them, it was a good Sign their Inclination was owing to His Agency and Influence; since no Men can naturally love to be expos'd to Extremities. Afterwards it must be own'd, when the Empire came to smile upon the Church, and the Ministry was the Way to Wealth, and Honour, and Power, it is not, it cannot be surprizing, it should be courted by many out of secular Ends, and a Number should be for it, to whose Hearts the Holy Ghost had little or no access: But where any have been, or are inclin'd to that sacred Office out of Love to the Work of it, (and that not as Men have model'd it, but as GOD has regulated it in his Word;) and out of Concern for the Block to be overseen, and an Apprehension of being likely to bring more Glory to GOD in this Way, than by acting in any other Capacity; I cannot see how an Inclination of this Sort can be from any but the Holy Ghost. At least, this is the avow'd Sense of the *Church of England* by Law establish'd, in which, at the receiving the first of the Three Orders they are for, he that officiates, puts this Question to every Candidate; *Do you trust that you are inwardly mov'd by the Holy Ghost, to take upon you this Office and Ministration to serve God for the Promoting of his Glory, and the edifying of his People?* They cannot therefore but herein concur with us. Tho' at the same time, with what Face such as are under the Guilt of *Simony*, which is so very common,) can ever return the Answer requir'd, and say, *I trust so:* And with what Heart the Ordainer can say to all that offer to Holy Orders indiscriminately, as he afterwards does, *Receive the Holy Ghost*, is hard to say.

2. AS the Holy Ghost has from Time to Time inclin'd some to the Ministry, so has He suitably qualify'd 'em for it: And without this, a bare Inclination would signify Nothing. Where an Inclination this Way has been of his producing, He has fitted them for what He has inclin'd them to; giving them
that

II

that Knowledge in divine Things, by a Blessing upon their Endeavours after it, and that Furniture in all Respects, that was requisite to fit them for the Work of this Office, in taking the Oversight of the Flock of Christ. And if the Skill of *Bezaleel* and *Aholiab* of old, when they were furnish'd with *Wisdom* and *understanding* and *Knowledge in all manner of Workmanship* that was requisite for the framing and adorning the material Tabernacle that was rear'd up for the divine Service in the Wilderness, was ascrib'd to the Spirit of GOD, how much more fit is it, that any Endowments of Mind that help to qualify Persons to act as Gospel Ministers, and in that Capacity to rear up living Temples to the Ever-living GOD, should be ascrib'd to the same Spirit, who we may be assur'd has a much greater Concern in this latter Case, than He had in the former. And I see not why we should scruple saying, He makes Persons Overseers of the Flock, when He qualifies them with such Gifts as render them fit for the Work of the Office, which is a plain Signification of his Mind, that laying other Cares apart, He'd have them *Overseers of the flock*, which He hath inclin'd 'em to, and fitted them for.

Exodus
xxxii. 3, 6.

3. AS the Holy Ghost has from one Time to another inclin'd some Persons to the Office of the Ministry, and qualify'd 'em for it, so has He also call'd 'em forth to it. This He has done by giving them Opportunity for a solemn Investiture in *Ordination*, when their Commission has been deliver'd to 'em, upon their declar'd Readiness to accept such an Office, and the Trust which it implies and carries in it, upon the Terms laid down in the Word of GOD. This *Ordination* is what in several Ages, according to different Schemes, there has been a Diversity of Sentiments about. Some have reckon'd it to be much like an inserting the Names of such and such particular Persons in the List or Register of publick Officers: Others look on it to be a solemn Investiture in the Office, upon proof given of a Concurrency of all the Qualifications that are necessary to fit Men for it: While others have apprehended it to amount to no more than a publick Declaration made by the Ordainers of their Satisfaction, in the Qualifications and as to the Fitness of the Parties concern'd for what they undertake and so they have imagin'd it might be done at a Distance, as well as nigh at Hand, and by Letter, as well as by Word of Mouth, or by the Use of Imposition

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 sition of Hands, for any other outward and visible Sign. This, join'd with serious and hearty Prayers for a Blessing from Heaven, is all that they can allow to *Ordination*. Without giving myself leave to enter at all upon the Reasons that are alledg'd on one Side or t'other in this Debate, I think the Holy Ghost may without any Impropriety, be said to make Persons Overseers or Ministers of the Flock of Christ, when He directs and influences the Minds of others that have been and are faithful in the same Office, to such an Approbation of those that offer as Candidates, as that they readily admit them into the same Office with themselves, and tho' they pretend not to give Power, (which must come from Him to whom *all Power is given, in Heaven and in Earth* yet declare them Ministers, and do all that in them lies to procure their Labours Acceptance, which is one Thing that is unquestionably necessary to their Success. But then it should be noted, that this holds only upon Supposition that they really have the Qualifications that are necessary to their Fitness. For the ablest Ministers that are, can no more make Persons Ministers, by Declaring or Proclaiming them such, if they are really unqualified, than they could do it, if they were altogether unclin'd. And then,

Matthew,
 xxviii. 28.

4. THE Holy Ghost has from one Time to another, not only inclined Persons to the Ministerial Office, and qualify'd them for it, and call'd them forth to it, but given them an Opportunity for the Exercising it, by inclining some to make choice of them, and commit themselves to their Pastoral Conduct, finding they needed their Help. I am not insensible how light this has been made of by some; but I must crave leave to differ from them. For I must confess, when a Number of serious Persons, that have the Concerns of their Souls at Heart, and are destitute of a Pastor, humbly apply themselves to GOD in Prayer, begging He would direct them in the Choice of a well-qualify'd and suitable Person to have the Oversight or them, and afterwards with Unanimity fix on such a Person to watch for their Souls; this to me bids as fair for coming from the Influence of the Holy Ghost, (supposing the Person to be antecedently inclin'd to the Office, and really qualify'd for it) as any Thing could well be suppos'd to do. I know not what we could have more in such a Case.

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IT cannot indeed be deny'd, but that where Persons have the free Choice of their own Pastors, Fancy may often very much influence them in the fixing on One rather than Another; Interest also may sometimes have a great Sway, and there may be Room for various Intreagues of designing Men, as we now and then see and observe to our Sorrow: And yet whatever Faults there may be in the Management of such Matters, when suitable and well-qualify'd Persons are by Choice affix'd to any particular Parts of the Flock of Christ, rather than others, and there is at once both the Consent of the Parties themselves, and of the particular Flocks they are to be over in the Lord, and the Approbation of other Ministers, I cannot see why this Concurrence amounts not to the Holy Ghost's setting them over these particular Worshipping Societies. And as great a Man as *Grotius*, seems to have been of this Mind, when he gives it as his Sense, That these *Elders of Ephesus*, are in my Text said to be made Overseers of the Flock by the Holy Ghost, because they were made such by the Apostles, Who were full of the Holy Ghost, with the Approbation of the People. And now,

3. LET us farther see, how any Men may know that the Holy Ghost makes them Overseers of the Flock; and how others may be so far satisfy'd of this, as rationally to acquiesce in their Oversight, without having Occasion to be disturb'd with the Clamours of People of different Sentiments. And here I'll venture to advance Two Assertions, which I think are attended with a sufficient Evidence. They are these:

1. THAT whosoever comes into the Ministerial Office according to the Will of GOD, is made an Overseer of the Flock by the Holy Ghost: and may by Consequence upon good Grounds expect and hope, that GOD will own his Ministrations, and concur with his Blessing on them. And,

2. THAT whosoever is upon good Grounds satisfy'd that he sits under such a Minister, has no Reason to question the Divine Blessing upon his Labours, to his Benefit, if the Fault be not his own. I say,

1. Whosoever comes into the Ministerial Office according to the Will of God, is made an Overseer of the Flock by the Holy Ghost, and may by consequence expect and hope, that God should own his Ministrations, and concur with his Blessing upon them

¹⁴ them. Whoever with right Views and Aims, finds himself inclin'd to the Work and Office of the Ministry, rather than to any other Business or Employment, and dispos'd to encounter the Difficulties, and bear with the Discouragements it has attending it, and is at the same time, so qualified for it, as the Nature of that Office, and the Rule of the Word requires; and is separated to God and his immediate Service, being sequester'd from the World and its Cares and Concerns; and has the Choice or Consent of a Society of Professing Christians to take the Charge of their Souls; every such Person may be safely said to come into the Ministry according to the Will of God, and nothing that can be prov'd necessary, is wanting in his Case. And upon this account he may expect and hope, that the Holy Ghost should own his Ministrations and concur with them, with his Blessing. Such an one comes within the reach of Our Lord's Promise of his Gracious Presence; and acting according to the Direction, and under the Conduct of the Holy Ghost, if he might not depend upon it, I know not who could have any Grounds to expect or look for it. And then,

2. I ADD farther, That whoever is upon good Grounds satisfy'd, that he sits under a Minister of this sort, has no reason to question the Divine Blessing upon his Labours, to his Benefit, if the Fault be not his own. And that for this Reason; because I cannot perceive, that any man can give better Proof, of his being under the Pastoral Care of one that the Holy Ghost has made his Overseer, than this amounts to

PEOPLE may in the General talk big, about the Necessity of a Regular Succession in the Ministry, from the Days of the Apostles down to the present Time, and the great and peculiar Hope that that would give of a Divine Benediction: But these are but great swelling Words of Vanity, Let us come down to Particulars, and when we are assailed by these mighty Boasters of a Regular Succession, let us demand good Proof, (and we have an unquestionable Right to demand and insist upon it) of the Uninterruptedness of the Line upon which they bottom their Claim, and we shall find them so hard put to it, that we shall be tempted to pity them *. Upon Search, we shall see the Proof

* BP *Stillingfleet* himself frankly owns, *Orig. Britan.* p. 77. that by the loss of the Records of the British Churches, we cannot draw down the Succession of Bishops from the Apostles Time. they

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they produce, is so dark and confus'd, so intricate and perplex'd, and several Links of the Chain so involved in Difficulties, that if we must stay for any Ground to hope for Benefit from the Labours of the Men of this Principle, 'til this is clear'd up to us, we shall be likely enough to wait all our Days, without any tolerable Satisfaction. And is it not a most miserable Thing, for Persons in a Case of this kind, when Matters of no less Consequence than Acceptance with God, and his Blessing, are under Debate, to be put upon Depending on meer Uncertainties! I never yet could see the Sense, nor the Wisdom, nor Comfort of this. Whereas upon the Scheme propos'd, of Inclination, Qualification, Ordination, and Election, Matters are plain and easy, and every thing is taken in, which either the Word of God, or the Nature of the Thing makes necessary.

WE have I think great Reason to bless Almighty GOD, that we have no Occasion so involve ourselves, in any such confused Labyrinth, where it is so hard to find a Clue that will bring us out. We have a plain way, and an easy Answer to the Difficulties that offer. The Bible contains the whole of our Religion, and we are not oblig'd to humane Traditions for any Part of it. We are divided into distinct particular Worshipping Societies; but 'tis the same Apostolical Doctrine that is deliver'd severally in them. These Flocks have their distinct Overseers, but they are such as are made by the Holy Ghost. He inclines them to the Office, fits them for it, and calls them forth to it; by inclining People first to choose them, or at least give their Consent that they should be their Pastors, and then to submit to them in the Lord, and other faithful Ministers to Ordain them. Having thus much, we need no more; and to affect more tends to nothing but Confusion. And now,

4. LET us see what we are to say, to the Ministerial Acts of such as are not *made Overseers of the Flock by the Holy Ghost*. All such, are assuredly accountable to GOD for their misconduct; tho' as to the Degree of their Guilt, it rises or falls, in Proportion to their breaking in more or less upon the Order that he has settled. They are plain Intruders, and meddle with what they ought not, or at least ought not as yet, till some farther Steps are taken. Their Ministerial Acts are irregular, and unwarranted

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Matth. ix.
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as far as they have the Management of them; but I dare not thereupon say they are altogether invalid. For I am well assur'd that GOD *will have Mercy, and not Sacrifice*: And I could with some would *learn what that meaneth*. The Sincerity of those whom such Persons have to do with, who may Act in the Uprightness of their Hearts, may intitle them to a Blessing, and often I doubt not, secures them of it.

I AM not insensible that we have had many among us of different Characters, who upon different Views, have given into other Notions, and been Warm in spreading them: But their Zeal is far beyond their Knowledge or Judgment; since they lay a great stress upon Niceties that will not bear them, and are eager for comparative Shadows, while they overlook the Substance. And withal, their Scheme is destructive of that Love, which the Writings of the *New Testament* lay such a stress upon, in excluding from GOD's Covenant Mercy, and in effect sending to the shades of Darkness, Persons of upright Hearts and Holy Lives, the Complexion of whose Spirits makes them incapable of any real Misery, and for whom a GOD of infinite Mercy, can never reasonably be suppos'd to have prepar'd any Place of Torment. To which I shall only add this Observation; that its seldom found, that they that are forward to invalidate the Ministry and Ministrations of such as differ in Opinion from them, take any Care to exceed them in Holiness of Life. And then,

5. THE insignificancy of other Things to make Men Overseers of the Flock of GOD, if the Agency of the Holy Ghost is wanting, deserves also to be seriously consider'd. And here without the least overstraining, I think I may venture to affirm, that if the Holy Ghost does not make Men Overseers of the Flock, they cannot be made truly such, either by thrusting themselves into the Service, or by the Consent of any Flock or particular Society of professing Christians to be under their Conduct, or by the Concurrence of any other Ministers or Overseers in their Design, or by the Power and Authority of Princes, or by their being presented by Patrons, or admitted into Orders, by the most Learned and Accomplish'd Prelates.

MEN can't make themselves Ministers, without the Holy Ghost, by thrusting themselves into the Service. This (besides that it would very commonly
leave

¹⁷leave Room for their remaining altogether unqualified) is a Working without being call'd, and a going without being sent, which St. *Paul* represents as carrying, so great an Absurdity in it, that it is not to be imagin'd in the Case of any that understand either themselves, or what they are about. Any Thing of this Nature is reckon'd very assuming, and justly liable to Censure between Men and Men; and is therefore to be sure blameable when the Church of GOD is concern'd.

Rom. x.
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MEN can't be made Ministers by the Consent of any Flock, or particular Society of professing Christians, to be under their Conduct, if the Holy Ghost does not concur; For this can neither give them Inclination, nor Qualifications, nor free from the just Objections of other Ministers, nor ingage their Concurrence. The Members of no particular Flock can make a Man their Overseer without the Holy Ghost, unless they let up their own Inclination in Opposition to Him, to whom there ought to be a most ready Subjection.

THE Concurrence of a good Number of ever so well qualify'd, or valuable Ministers, cannot make those Overseers of the Flock whom the Holy Ghost does not make such, because it may still possibly leave them so unqualify'd for the Service, as to be more likely to fall under a Curse than obtain a Blessing.

THE Authority and Power of Princes cannot make Men Overseers of the Flock without the Holy Ghost, because it cannot secure them of necessary Qualifications, nor of that Acceptance without which there is no Prospect of Usefulness. Nor is this an Affair that comes within the Compass of the Commission from GOD, by which Princes act in their exalted Stations. They may many Ways encourage them in their Service, and discourage Irregularities among them; but as for making them Ministers, 'tis altogether out of their Province.

NOR can the Presentation of a Patron make a Man an Overseer of the Flock. It may indeed give him a Right to a certain Income, (which is the true Reason why 'tis so much courted, and why Persons are often brought to such mean, and dishonest, and scandalous Compliances, in order to the compassing it) but it can neither help Persons to the Qualifications that are heedful for Ministerial Service, nor oblige

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 the People in Conscience to submit to their Oversight, if they are able to provide better for themselves.

NOR finally, can a Man's being admitted into Orders, by the most accomplish'd Prelate that is, make him an Overseer without the Holy Ghost. For a dignify'd Person may be mistaken in judging of another, as well as a Minister who stands upon a Level with his Brethren. And supposing he judg'd rightly, 'tis not in his Power to bring any Worshipping Society to a Willingness to attend upon his Labours, and submit to his pastoral Oversight, unless GOD incline their Hearts so to do. Nor could I ever yet see upon what solid Grounds he could pretend to urge it upon their Consciences to do it, if it was their real Apprehension they could make better Provision for themselves.

IN short; Upon strict Search, I cannot see how any Man can approve himself to GOD and his own Conscience, as an Overseer of the Flock in the Gospel Sense, who is not made such by the Holy Ghost.

III. *Prop.* THEY whom the Holy Ghost makes Overseers of the Flock of GOD, are true and proper Bishops. They are so, in the full scriptural Sense of the Word. For however it is as to humane Writings, I cannot find that in Scripture the Word *Bishop*, ever signifies One that is superior to other Ministers in Power or Jurisdiction, or any Way above them, unless when it is apply'd to our Lord JESUS CHRIST, the Great Bishop of Souls. In all other Places, it rather intimates One who jointly with other Ministers, has the Oversight of the Flock of GOD committed to him. For which Reason, I have often thought it could not be without Design that our Translators have in my Text us'd the Word *Overseers*, rather than *Bishops*. For had they render'd it as they should have done in this Manner; *Take Heed unto yourselves, and to all the Flock, over which the Holy Ghost hath made you Bishops*: These Words spoken to Elders or Presbyters, might have fill'd them with Thoughts not very favourable to the Hierarchy. And to avoid this, they turn'd the Word *Overseers*. And the Alteration that has been made in *the Form and Manner of Making and Consecrating Bishops, Priests and Deacons, according to the appointment of the Church of England*, since the first Reformation, with Respect to the Use of this very Text, seems to have been in Pursuit of the same Design,

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Design, and therefore deserves our Observation. For whereas at first, that Part of the twentieth Chapter of the *Acts*, in which is my Text, was appointed to be read as the *Epistle in the Form of Ordaining Priests*, and so Presbyters were as it were put in Mind, that these Words, were spoken to all of their Order, and that therefore they were proper scriptural Bishops, there has been an Alteration made since, (tho' when I cannot say) and, these Words are only us'd now as the *Epistle, in the Form of consecrating Archbishops or Bishops*.

BUT still in the Sense of Scripture, I can find no Difference between Bishops and Presbyters. Our Blessed Lord JESUS appears not to have made any Difference between them; for in the Ministerial Commission (which is but one) He makes no Distinction of Power as to any to whom that Office is delegated. All Gospel Ministers are requir'd to disciple the Nations, and baptise them when discipled, in the Name of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost, and to teach them all Things that Christ commanded, without the least Hint that any might warrantably baptize and administer the Eucharist, who were not allow'd to confirm and ordain, or any Thing from which it can be gather'd. Nor does St. *Paul* seem to have known any Difference between Bishops and Presbyters: For he through his Epistles, gives Gospel Ministers either the one or the other Name indiscriminately, without the least Signification that there was any one Thing that the One could do, which the other could not do as well; and in my Text, when he gave his last Charge to the Elders of *Ephesus*, he commits the Care of the Flock to them, without the least Intimation of any superior Officer, whom they were oblig'd to act in Subordination to. Nor have we any Evidence, that *Timothy* ever came to them afterwards. And that *Feeding the Church* takes in Government as well as Instruction, appears from Christ's Commission to *Peter* to *feed his Sheep*, which we can't reasonably suppose excluded him from a Power to rule and ordain, &c. Nor did St. *Peter* know any Difference between Bishops and Presbyters: And he in effect disclaims any such Thing, when speaking to Presbyters, he charges them ἐπισκοπῶν; that is, to Bishop it, or act the Part of Bishops, over the Flock of GOD, tho' our Translators have there also, (with the same View, I suppose, as they had in their Version of my Text,) rendred it *taking the Oversight thereof*. And as for this last Pas-

1 Pet. v. 2.

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sage of St. *Peter*, I think it makes it plain, that at the Time when this Epistle was written, there was not only an Identity of Name between Bishops and Presbyters (which is all that some will allow) but also an Identity of Work and Office. And if there was so then, I know no Reason why it may not be allow'd to be so still. The Difference that has risen since, is of Man's ordaining, and not of Christ's appointing. True Gospel Ministers, are still as much as ever Overseers or Bishops of the Flock, made such by the Holy Ghost, in the Sense before explain'd; and this to all spiritual Purposes is more significant, than to be Bishops of Mens making. And since they whom the Holy Ghost makes Overseers of the Flock, are true and proper Bishops, it follows by a necessary Consequence, that they that are ordain'd Presbyters, are to all the Purposes of of the Gospel ordain'd Bishops; and they who are ordain'd by Presbyters, are ordain'd by Bishops; and by as good and as truly authoriz'd Bishops, as we have any Hint of in the Word of GOD.

IV. *Prop.* THEY whom the Holy Ghost has most evidently made Overseers of the Flock of Christ, need to be admonish'd of their Duty, and stir'd up to put it in practice. The Admonition of the Apostle in my Text was groundless, but upon this Supposition. For why should he pretend to admonish those whom he own'd to be made Overseers of the Flock by the Holy Ghost, if they did not need to be admonish'd, as well as they of whom they had the Oversight. Nor was this a singular Instance. We find the same Apostle admonish'd *Timothy* and *Titus*, and his Exhortations to them by Way of Epistles, are yet extant, and a very valuable Part of the *New Testament* Writings. Our Blessed Lord JESUS also after his Ascension to Heaven, sent by the Apostle St. *John* Admonitions to the *Angels*, that is, the Overseers of the Seven Churches of *Asia*, and we have them remaining to this Day, in the three first Chapters of *the Revelation*. And if Overseers of such Eminence as these were, needed to be admonish'd, we may be assur'd, that ordinary Gospel Ministers, who have visibly the same Infirmities with their Hearers, and are liable to like Temptations with them, need it much more.

IF it be ask'd, Who must oversee the Overseers? I answer, 'Tis their plain Duty to oversee one another, and to give Advice, Admonitions, and Reproofs to each

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each other with all Freedom and Faithfulness, and to submit to each other, with Humility and Meekness. Or if the Care of this, should by Consent be committed to one of the Brethren, peculiarly, that is eminently qualify'd for such a Service, provided he were still accountable to, and censurable by the whole Body, as Occasion might require, I am not he that should have any mighty Objection against it.

V. *Prop.* IT is the Duty of all those whom the Holy Ghost has made Overseers of the Flock of Christ, to *take Heed to themselves.* There is Need of this, *least* as St. Paul expresses it, *when they had preach'd to others, they themselves should prove Castaways.* And if such an One as he was, ever had any Fear of that Kind stirring in him, much more may we. Ministers should take heed to themselves, because they have many Eyes upon them, some to take Example from them, and others to pick Quarrels with them. 'Tis not at all likely that the People should obey the Admonitions of those Overseers, whole Carriage shews that they themselves make light of them. That Minister who in his Life has no suitable Regard to the Doctrine he teaches, neglects an essential Part of his Office, and while he builds with one Hand, pulls down with t'other; and tempts Men to suspect that he does not really believe what he teaches in the Name of GOD. If the Overseers of the Flock don't take heed to themselves, they'll do very little Good in their Stations, they'll have little Reason to expect that the Holy Ghost (from whom must be all the *Increase*, if even a *Paul planted*, or an *Apollos watered*) should give a Blessing to their Labours, and they'll have a sad Account to give to GOD another Day. They ought to search and prove, that they may know themselves. He that knoweth not himself, is apt to be proud and confident, and boldly to venture upon any Thing that offers, to which he is inclin'd, and so to run the Hazard of his own Ruin: Whereas he that knows, and is feelingly sensible of his Unworthiness, and his Liableness to the Divine Displeasure, on the Account of his manifold Sins and Disorders, together with his spiritual Impotence, and the Perverseness of his Desires and Lusts, in which he is but like other Men, will be apt to be cautious and circumspect, jealous of himself, and afraid of being *drawn away of his own Lust and enticed.* As he that walks in the Dark-

1 Cor. ix.
27.

— iii. 6.

Jam. i. 14.

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ness of the Night, by searching our Paths for his Feet, keeps himself from Wandring; so he that attends to the Ways of the LORD, to walk in them, takes heed to himself. Of this Gospel Ministers should be careful, both upon their own Recount, and also upon the Account of the Flock of GOD, of which they have the Oversight: For that without it, they are neither likely to save themselves nor others.

Tit. i. 9.

THEY to whom the Oversight of the Flock is committed, should take heed to themselves, that they may not only have that Measure of Knowledge that is necessary to their giving suitable Instructions to those that are under their Care, but also that they may be furnish'd for *convincing Gainsayers*: And that they may be arm'd with all the Fortitude that is necessary to the saving those committed to their Care, out of the Hands of ravenous Wolves. They ought to take Heed to themselves, that their Judgments be found, their Hearts holy, and their Lives exemplary; that they may be fit for what they undertake, and acquit themselves rightly in it, and at last be able to give up their Account with Joy. 'Tis sad in any, but above all in Overseers of the Flock of GOD, to see Motes in the Eyes of Others, while they take no notice of Beams that are in their own. For my Part, tho' I'm well satisfy'd in my Work and Station as a Minister, yet I shan't stick to declare that were I in the Capacity of a Private Christian to fix myself under some one Person as a Pastor, whose Oversight I could best approve of, tho' I could not allow myself to break in upon any Part of Christ's real Settlement with respect to his Church, I yet should be apt to lay a good deal more Stress upon this one Qualification, than on any Thing relating to the Regularity of his Mission; and should think I might without much Difficulty, justify myself in so doing.

VI. *Prop.* IT is also the unquestionable Duty of those whom the Holy Ghost has made Overseers of the Flock, to take Heed to all that belong to it without any Exception. And unless this be minded, they are unfaithful to the Holy Ghost in the Office he has committed to them. They are not to imagine they have discharg'd their Conscience, or done their Duty, in living innocently, honestly and regularly, but they are to look after those that are under their Inspection, that they may not only *save themselves*, but *those*

1 Tim. iv.
16.

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those also that hear them. And if at any Time when they are endeavouring herein to do their Duty, they are treated roughly, and ask'd by those whom they apply to, What they have to do with them, for that every Man must give an Account of himself at last? they should not be dishearten'd, having a proper Reply to make, for which they need not be to seek, *viz.* That we that are Ministers have it given us in Charge by Him that has made us Overseers of the Flock, to take Heed to them as well as ourselves, and they are ordered to *submit themselves*, while we *watch for their Souls*.

Heb. xiii.
17.

ALL the Flock must be attended to, and none neglected, Rich and Poor, Learned and Ignorant, Strong and Weak, Young and Old. must all be minded. All should be known, that all may be Overseen, and all acquainted with their Duty and Danger, and all suited, in Publick Preaching, and Private Application. 'Tis our Duty to deal with ill according to their different Circumstances, tho' al can't be suited at once. We must endeavour to bring unsound Professors of the Faith to Sincerity, that so they who before were only Christians in Name and shew may become so indeed; and to build up such as we already truly converted. We are to do our wmost, that the Young and Weak may be advanc'd; the Distemper'd recover'd, the Declining reduc'd, the Tempted succour'd, the Drooping and Disconsolate chear'd, and the Strong more and more establish'd. And this is such Work, and every Overseer of the Flock has so much of it upon his Hands, that we may very well cry Out, *Who is sufficient?* And yet we may safely say, *Blessed is that Servant whom his Lord when he cometh shall find so doing;* and endeavouring herein to discharge his Duty.

2 Cor. ii.
16.
Matth.
xxiv.46.

YOU of this Society, have great Reason to be thankful, that in your destitute Condition, the Holy Ghost gives you One, to be your Ovrerseer or Bishop, that is, so well fitted to carry on the Work of the Lord among you. Regard him I beseech you from this Day forward, as over you in the Lord, a Steward of the Mysteries of GOD for you Benefit and an Helper of your Joy. Receive him in the Lord with all Gladness, and hold him in Reputation, Readily receive instructon from him, and Reproof too as there is Occasion. Be free with him in the Concerns of your Souls. Do all you can to encourage him

²⁴him in his Service, and take Heed of sadning or grieving him. Make Conscience of giving him the Help of your most serious Prayers. Let him find you a willing, tractable, respectful, and obedient People, and I hope you'll have in him a Faithful Pastor. And may the great Shepherd of the Sheep give such a Blessing both to Him and you, as that you may have a comfortable Meeting before the Great Judge of Quick and Dead at last.

A Charge at an ORDINATION.

My Dear BRETHREN.



HO' we that have been just laying Hands upon you, pretend not to any thing like Authority over you, and you are now as true and full Ministers of the Gospel as ourselves, who as far as I can perceive have as plain a Scriptural Warrant for our Proceedings as any can pretend to in these Matters, yet can you not I am persuaded think much of our endeavouring, after your having gone through so solemn a Transaction, to give you a fair View of the State of your Case, your Work and Duty, your Difficulties and Encouragements, and the Motives that ought to excite you; adding a little Advice from our own Experience in the same Service, which is all we farther aim at.

I CAN very safely say for my Brethren and my self jointly, that we have done our Part of the Work of this Day with no small Pleasure. 'Tis not a little to our Satisfaction, to find you so ready to take Part in the same Service with us 'Twould be very unjust in any one to Charge us with *laying Hands suddenly* upon you. You are so well known and approv'd, that we are far from being asham'd of you. And we have taken fitting Precautions as to your future Conduct, by the Promises you have made, which yet we have not extended any further than a few necessary Things, which being in themselves Matter of plain Duty, we apprehended the explicitness of your Ingements about them, would help to render your Sense of them the more awful. We that know no right any have to impose upon Conscience, (in which we are glad to find you so frank in declaring your Concurrence with

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with us) have been far from requiring you to Promise any thing that was not necessary to the answering the Ends of the Ministerial Office, and the approving your selves to Him that instituted it for the Good of his Church.

AND now (my Brethren) I wish you good Speed in the Name of the Lord. I do it most heartily in the Name of all my Brethren, May the GOD of Heaven be with you, direct, assist and strengthen you: May He increase your Ministerial Furniture, by the multiply'd Gifts im Graces of his Holy Spirit: May He make you eminently Useful in His House, and Crown your Endeavours with an abundant Success: May you be remarkably helpful to Spread serious Religion, where-ever your Lot is cast; and have many to be your Joy and your Crown at the Great Day. He that knoweth all Things knoweth, that these are our Hearty Wishes and unfeigned Desires for you.

THO' we have good Hopes that these our Desires will not be unanswer'd, yet should we be apprehensive we fail'd in our Duty, did we not according to our common Custom add a warm brotherly Admonition before we dismiss'd you. And who knows but it may further heighten the Seriousness of your own Spirits, and ingige the hearty Prayers of many good Christians for you; and at the same Time contribute to the Conviccton of others, that we that are excluded the publick Establishment, are no such Persons, as some have industriously represented us.

THIS part of the Work and Service of the Day being devolv'd upon me, I can before-hand assure you, I shall be so for from affecting to bind heavy burdens upon you, that I shall offer nothing to you, but what I reckon myself equally concern'd in and oblig'd to with you; and so shall act the Part of a Remembrancer to myself and you at the same Time.

LET me then desire you to recollect those affecting Words of St. Paul to Timothy; *I give thee Charge, says he, in the Sight of God who quickneth all Things, and before Christ Jesus, who before Pontius Pilate witnessed a good Confession, that thou keep the Commandment without Spot, unrebukeable, until the appearing of our Lord Jesus Christ.* In like manner, I conjure you my Brethren, in the Name of GOD and of his Christ, to continue stedfast in your Holy Calling, and not only not to abandon the glorious Course, you are entred upon, but to abate nothing of your Vigour and

1 Tim. vi.
13, 14.

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Earnestness in it, whatsoever may happen to you: Religiously performing all Things which the Rule of your Office (to which you have sworn) requires, and to which you are oblig'd, both by your Matter's Order, and your own Promises, which I hope you will be often recollecting, and never forget.

YOU have receiv'd your Commission, and are come under most solemn Bonds in the Presence of GOD, and the Blessed Jesus, the Holy Angels, and the Church; and your answering them with Fidelity and Care is a Thing of the last Consequence, not only to yourselves but to many others. Let me then beg it of you that you'll take Heed to your Doctrine, take Heed to yourselves, take Heed to the Flock of GOD, which He hath purchased with his own Blood: Take Heed to the Ministry which you have receiv'd in the Lord, that ye fulfil it: Take Heed of Snares and Temptations which you'll find on all Hands surround you; and take Care to improve all the Helps that are afforded you, to the best Advantage: And thus doing you may depend upon it that a special Presence of GOD will be with you. his Blessing continually will attend you, and his Glory at last Crown you, to your abundant Satisfaction and Joy.

1 Tim. iv.
16.

I. *TAKE Heed unto your Doctrine.* Let that be Apostolical; the very same that Christ deliver'd to his Apostles, and they to the Church, not only by Word of Mouth but in their Writings. This Doctrine you profess to have receiv'd; I beseech you continue in it to the End of your Lives. Adhere firmly to it as it is deliver'd in the Holy Scriptures, which are the true Standard which all Creeds and Confessions, Systems, and Theological Tracts and Discourses are to be measur'd by: And be ready to maintain and defend it, *and oppose them that Teach any other Doctrine.*

1 Tim. iv.
3.
1 Tim. i.
11.

REMEMBER that the Gospel, the *Glorious gospel of the Blessed God*, was committed to St. Paul the great Apostle of the Gentiles *as a Trust*: and he afterwards committed it as such, to all whom he sent forth into the sacred Miniftry, and particularly to *Timothy and Titus*: And it well deserves your Observation, that his Epistles to them he often and most earnestly recommends it to their Care, and Charges them by all that is Sacred to keep it safe, as a Treasure of inestimable Value, with a most religious Jealousie, that so no Alteration might ever happen to it, in their Hands, or through their Neglect. GOD's heavenly

Truth

²⁷ Truth is indeed in a Sense committed as a Trust to the whole Church, and to all *the Saints*, and they are all bound to *contend for it*, and keep it safe: But the Care of it more particularly and peculiarly belongs to Ministers, whom the Holy Ghost hath made Overseers of the Flock; a main Part of whose Charge it is to keep and administer this divine Trust. This very same Doctrine have we this Day committed to your Truth; I beseech you *keep it; avoiding profane and vain Babblings, and Oppositions of Science, falsely so called. Hold fast the Term of sound Words, in Faith and Love, which is in Christ Jesus.* With good Reason may you look upon it as a mighty Honour that is conferred on you by the Great GOD, for Him to make you Depositories of his heavenly Truths, which are design'd to save the Souls of Men. Let not such an Honour as this, be either despis'd or abus'd by any of you. Mix not the Truth of GOD, which you are entrusted with, with the vain Inventions of Superstition or Error of any Sort.

Jude v. 3.

1 Tim. vi. 20.

2 Tim. i. 13.

THERE are Two Things which St. Paul lays a great Stress upon in the Case of all Gospel Ministers; The one is, That they be *faithful Men*; and the other, That they be *able to teach others also*. As to your being *able* (my Brethren) *to teach others*, we have had good and satisfactory Evidence. We are no Strangers to you; but have had that Proof of your Improvement of the Helps you have had in your Education, and the Stock of Knowledge you have laid in, that we have no Doubt of your being *able by sound Doctrine, both to exhort, and to convince the Gainsayers*. And had We not apprehended we had good Ground for Hope as to the other also, that you would be *faithful*, I can assure you, we had never committed so great a Trust to you; we durst not have attempted it. And if now you fail, 'tis not us only that you'll deceive, but your selves, and your own Souls, and the Church of GOD: And tho' as for the Blessed GOD, He cannot be deceiv'd, yet you'll have a sad Account to give to Him another Day.

2 Tim. ii. 2.

Tit. i. 9.

HENCE forward you are *Stewards* in the House of GOD, and Dispensers of *his Mysteries*. Now 'tis requir'd of such, to be *found faithful*. If they are not so, they are the worst of Men. See to it then, that you answer your Trust. Give unto the Flock of Christ that very Doctrine which you have receiv'd through the Hands of the Apostles. Be assur'd, it can neither

1 Cor. iv. 1, 2.

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be lost, nor corrupted, nor Alter'd in your Hands, without your being grossly unfaithful. So keep what has been committed to you, as neither to add to, alter, nor take from it. Be careful *rightly* to *divide* the *Word of Truth*, and dispence it prudently, according to the different Conditions and Wants of those that hear it, giving every One that which suits him. And tho' thus doing, I dare not undertake you shall always be well treated by Men, nay; cannot pretend, but it may be your Lot sometimes, as it has been that of others, to complain, That you have *laboured in vain, and spent your Strength for nought, and in vain*; yet still *your judgment will be with the Lord, and your Work with your God*; and you shall not go without your Reward. And then,

2 Tim. iii.
15.Isa. xlix.
2.1 Tim. iv.
16.
Acts xx.
28.

2. TAKE Heed also to yourselves. Do so particularly, as to your Tempers, Lives, and Walk. Endeavour after a right Gospel Spirit, which will be of no small Use to you in the Whole of your Service. The Ministry requires a different Spirit from other Callings. To an advantageous Discharge of it, there is requisite a deep Sense of the Truth and the Power of Religion, the Want of which will not so much affect Men of other Occupations, in the Management of their proper Business. Endeavour therefore after an habitually serious Spirit, and so strive so manage the several Offices you are call'd to discharge, as that it may be thereby promoted. Get your Spirits as much as may be purg'd from vicious Lusts and Passions. Endeavour after that gentle, and meek, and compassionate Temper, which the Gospel so much presses, and of which the Author of it was so bright an Example: And aim at excelling in that Love to GOD, that Zeal for Christ, that Companion for the Souls of Men, that Humility of Mind, that Mastery of your Appetites, and that Mortification and Deadness to this World, that becomes the Character and Profession you have taken upon you. Strive also to get a *patient* or *forbearing* Spirit, without which, upon a great many Occasions, you'll be hard put to it.

2 Tim. ii.
24.

Tit. ii. 7.

1 Tim. iv.
12.

TAKE Heed to your Lives and Walk. Be not satisfy'd for them to be free from visible Stains; but let them be Exemplary. *In all Things sew yourselves Patterns of good Works. Be Examples of the Believers, in Word, in Conversation, in Charity, in Spirit, in Faith, in Purity.* Be more careful of it upon this Account; because Nothing may more easily be discern'd

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cern'd than that Men are so dispos'd, that they'll much more mind how you live, than what you say. And what can be more dreadful, than for Ministers to pull own and destroy by their bad Examples, what they seem to take Pains to build up with the Words of their Mouths! A loose and rakish, a proud and fierce, worldly-minded and covetous Minister, so palpably gives the Lye to the most serious Discourses he can deliver from the Pulpit, that he can have no Reason to expect they should have much Weight, or make any greet Impression. Take Heed of this, that your Ministry may not be blam'd or fruitless. Beware of the Vices you warn others against, that your Hearts may bear witness to your Sincerity, without being able to accuse you of Fraudulence or Hypocrisy. Dread the discovering a Love of the Wealth, or the Pomp, or the Pleasures of this World, all which you are to be endeavouring to wean others from. *The love of this present World* will either with *Demas* bring you to forsake the Ministry, or to behave your selves unsuitably and unsuccessfully in it. *Entangle not yourselves with the Affairs of this Life*, which *St. Paul* so freely warns *Timothy* against. You have Work enough upon your Hands (as you'll see presently) to ingage you wholly, and employ all your Time.

2 Tim. iv.
10.

— ii. 4.

TAKE Heed to your Carriage to chose among whom you labour. 'Twill be but in vain for you to think to work upon them, if you don't move their Affections, and gain their Esteem: And yet let not that be your chief and governing Aim. Let them see that you are full of an ardent Love to Christ and his Gospel, and that you desire Nothing more than to do their Souls good, and to train them up for Heaven: And if an Opportunity fairly offers in your Way, be not backward to promote their temporal Interest. This will be a good Method to gain their Hearts, which will not a little promote your Usefulness among them.

BE prudent in your general Carriage, Avoid every Thing that looks like Tricking or Undermining: Be affable and courteous, that so none may be able to charge you with Moroseness or Sullenness. Carry it with Benignity to all you converse with. Think not much of Stooping to the meanest Offices of Charity; and yet at the same Time studiously avoid every thing that is mean, or base, or servile. Be not over Talkative, Meddlers in other Mens Matters, busy in State Affairs,

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 Affairs, or Affecters of being thought Politicians. Speak the best of others you can, and discover not a Willingness to detract from them: And never endeavour to lessen the Value of other Men, with a Design to increase your own. Be not hasty in believing or receiving, and much less in spreading ill Reports. And if in this Respect, or any other, you have been injurious to a Neighbour or a Brother, don't need pressing to give him Satisfaction.

BE ready at any Time to give an Account of your Principles and Practises in a Way of Conversation: And that you may be the better furnish'd for it, take Care to be well prepar'd upon Four Heads. Be not at any Time to seek, to shew why you are *Christians* and not *Deists*, why *Protestants* and not *Papists*, why *Dissenters* and not of the *Legal Establishment*, and why *Ministers* rather than of any other Calling. Your being able to discourse off hand, well and handsomely upon these Topicks, may help to recommend you, and keep you from being ever at a Loss for profitable Conversation.

BE cautious in your Carriage towards those that are without; I mean, that neither own your Ministry, nor will attend in any such Worshipping Assemblies as those in which you officiate. Let your Behaviour discover that you are no Enemies of theirs, how much soever they may be set against you. If you have any thing to do with, *Deists*, *Soci-nians*, *Arrians*, or *Papists*, carry it to them with Humanity; and let them see that you bear no Ill-will to their Persons, how much soever you dislike their Principles or Practises.

AND as for those that are Warm for the National Church Establishment, out of which you are excluded, carry it to them as Brethren, how much soever you find they differ from you. Never treat them with Contempt, or return Railing for Railing. Shew them by your Behaviour that an Hearty Brotherly Love is very confident with all that Diversity of Sentiments there is between them and us. Rejoyce in the Usefulness of any of them to spread serious Piety, or promote Works of Charity, at the same Time as you freely lament (and not without Reason), the visibly much greater Zeal of the most of them, to promote the Interest of a Party, both here at Home, and in foreign Parts. Endeavour to convince them of that which is a very great Truth, and our real Glory, that
 our

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our Charity is much more generous, disinterred, and extensive than theirs. And how forward soever they appear to be to bear hard upon you, and those who you are satisfy'd are in the main in the Right, instead of running as far from them as you can, discover a readiness upon all Occasions, to join in with them in any Thing that may do real Service to the Civil Government, or promote serious Piety, or even contribute to an Happy Accomodation of Differences in the Church, upon their discovering that Temper that is necessary to produce Peace, and such a farther Union as none may have Cause to Complain of, as bearing hard upon them, in depriving them of any Thing to which they have a natural, a civil, or a scriptural Right.

THINK it not a small Thing to have the good Report of those without; but Use all Prudent and honest Ways in order to it; remembring that this is charg'd upon all Christians without Exception, but peculiarly upon Ministers. And then,

3. TAKE Heed to the Flock of God, which he hath purchased with his own Blood. Mind all the Flock, and let none of them be out of your Thoughts or deny'd your Care. Feed both Sheep and Lambs, as having taken the Oversight of all. Have a Regard to young Ones as well as elder Persons. I have sometimes been inclin'd to think that more might be done for GOD among them with right and prudent Management, than is usual and common. Mind the Poor as well as the Rich. Let not the former be neglected, while the latter are courted. Their Souls are equally Precious in the Sight of GOD, and you'll be as accountable for them at the last. Take Heed not only to those that respect you, and carry it well to you, but to such also as may be froward, (and Wonder not if you meet with some such) and deal with them with all Meekness. Take Heed to such as you find Reason to Fear are yet unconverted, and use all possible earnestness with them, to bring them to an hearty Subjection to the Lord Jesus Christ. Take Heed to those that are already brought Home to GOD through the Redeemer, and use your utmost Endeavours to Build them up in their most Holy Faith. Do all that in you lies, to bring the Unsound to Sincerity, to strengthen the Weak, to succour the Tempted, to restore the Declining, to recover the Fallen, to comfort those that are Disconsolate, and to encourage such as stand

1 Thess.
iv. 11.
1 Tim. iii.
7.
Acts xx.
28.

1 Pet. v. 2.

³²stand their Ground hitherto, to persevere in well-doing to the last.

AND here, give me leave to recommend one Thing to you, as of no small Consequence. 'Tis, That you would be particularly tender of such as are under Spiritual Trouble. Not only endeavour to be well vers'd in that which we commonly call Casuistical Divinity, that so you may be able to give suitable Advice to such as apply to you with their difference Cases, which you'll sometimes find difficult and intricate enough; but let those that come to you in distress of Mind and with wounded Spirits, find that you Sympathise with them, which will be some relief to them, and make them the more apt to be impress'd with the Advice you give them.

Heb. xiii.
17.

Ezek. iii.
19, 20.

Col. iv.
17.

Tit. ii. 15.

IN short, *Watch for Souls*, as they that know you must *give an Account*. Act like Persons that are afraid of having *the Blood* of those that are under your Care *required at your Hands*: And rest assur'd you must answer for all those, whom you by your Negligence or ill Management shall prejudice against the Gospel, or betray to Ruin.

4. TAKE Heed to the Ministry which you have receiv'd in the Lord, that you fulfil it. This was St. Paul's Charge to Archippus, and I have Reason to apply it to you. Your Office is highly Honourable. 'Tis designed for the Salvation of the Souls of Men, which GOD form'd after his own Image, and Christ redeem'd with His most precious Blood. Be careful to maintain the Dignity of your Office. *Let no Man despise you*. Let not your Office be despised through any Faults of yours. Endeavour to advance the Honour of your sacred Character, by an exemplary Fiery, and a mining Conversation. As corrupt as the Age is, this will secure you from a general Contempt; and with some it will procure you a cordial Respect, and Veneration.

APPLY to each Part of your Work with Care, and let none be omitted, or negligently manag'd. Let your publick Prayers be serious, scriptural, comprehensive, suited to the common Cases of those whose Wants and Desires you would express, and the different Steps of Divine Providence: Let them be the fruit of retired Meditation, not over tedious, nor flat, nor made up of vain Repetitions.

I Tim. iv.
2.

PREACH the Word, be instant in Season and out of Season; reprove, rebuke exhort, with all Long-suffering and Doctrine.

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Doctrine. In your Sermons, aim at edifying your Hearers, rather than gratifying their Curiosity. Let them contain the same Doctrine as was deliver'd by St. *Paul* to *Timothy* and *Titus*, and other first Preachers and Publishers of Christianity. With all possible Seriousness Preach to your People, the Christ whom St. *Paul* ador'd, the Grace which he Taught; the Faith, the Life, the Spirit, the Hope, the Love, and the Sacraments and other Services which he recommended. Dilate not much upon Niceties; but insist most on the most needful end substancial Things. Open to those that sit under your Ministry, the Foundation of all Religion, the Divinity of the Scriptures, and their Sufficiency, the Covenant of Grace, and the Terms of Acceptance with GOD, and the Suitableness of the Mediator provided for lapsed Creatures, the Riches and Fullness of the Divine Promises, the Odiousness and Malignity of Sin, the Nature, Necessity and Excellency of Holiness, and the Certainty and importance of Things eternal. It is by insisting on such Things, as these that you may do the most Good. *Handle not the Word of God deceitfully, but by Manifestation of the Truth, commend yourselves to every Mans Conscience in the Sight of God.* Let me recommend it to you, to do your Part, that that plain Practical Preaching that was begun by our Good Old Puritans, and by keeping up which the Modern Nonconformists (as much at they have been despis'd) have been so Useful, may not be lost among us.

2 Cor. iv.
2.

TO Preaching, add Catechising, the want of which keeps many all their Days in Ignorance, and is the Cause that they neither rightly understand the Sermons they hear, nor profit by them.

BE serious and solemn in Administring both the Sacraments, which in the Age we live in are so much slighted. When you baptize Infants, take the Opportunity of making the Parents sensible of their Neglect if they come not to the Lord's Table; and do what you can to convince them, how much it is both their Duty and Interest, to breed up their young Ones for that GOD to Whom they pretend to devote them. Whenever you are call'd to baptize Persons that are grown up to Years, take care that they tolerably understand the Fundamentals of Religion, and the Terms of the Covenant they are to enter into with GOD through a Mediator; and that after they are baptiz'd they come speedily to the Eucharist, and act as Pers-

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 sons that are sensible, that if they are fit for one Sacrament, they are so for both. Stick not attacking Pious with such as are passing out of the State of Infant into that of Adult Church Members, that so you may bring 'em to renew their Baptismal Covenant, in the holy Eucharist, understandingly, deliberately, and sincerely. Make not the Terms of Admission to the Table of the Lord either more lax, or more strait, than GOD has done in his Word. When Men come to discourse with you with respect to that Solemnity, don't put them upon the Rack, or attempt to pry into the Secrets either of their Consciences, or their Families; but do all you can to fix them firmly in GOD's Interest, in Opposition to the Powers of Darkness. And whatever may be the Way of Others, for whose Practise you are not answerable, let nothing prevail with you to give the Sacrament as a Passport to Heaven, to such sick and dying Persons, as tho' often invited to it, neglected it in their Health and Strength, which is an End it was not designed to serve: Be afraid of this, as you would not betray poor Souls to endless Perdition.

1 Pet. v. 3.

BE not negligent of Christian Discipline, and yet affect not Dominion. Don't so much as desire to *Lord it over God's Heritage*; and yet encourage not plain and palpable Irregularities and Disorders. Reprove when there is Occasion, and don't spare, least you be charg'd with Unfaithfulness by Him from whom you had your Commission: And yet beware of covering your own Pride, Passion and Fierceness, upon any Occasion, with a Pretence of rectifying what is amiss in Others. In reproof, or suspending, or rejecting from Communion, be not influenc'd by Favour or Affection on one Hand, or Ill-will on the other, *Do nothing by Partiality*. Be not in such Things as these, sway'd by a regard to Friendship, Intercession, or Importunity. Let it not be your Choice to Act alone in disciplinary Matters, but endeavour to have the wiser Part at least of your Congregations to support and back you; and if you meet with peculiar Difficulties ask Advice and Help of your Brethren, remembering that in *a Multitude of Counsellors there is Safety*. Be careful whensoever you have any Things that are irregular under your Consideration, to suit yourselves to the different Circumstances that appear. Let your Proof be good and clear, before you suppose any Persons guilty, or deal with them as such
 Don't

1 Tim. v.
 21.

Prov. xi.
 14.

35

Don't allow yourselves to act upon Suspicions and Surmizes, by which you may come to injure the Innocent, which is much worse than to let the Guilty escape. And when your Proof is so evident that it is not to be Contested, deal with some as tenderly as if they were your Parents *Rebuke not and Elder, but intreat, him as a Father, the elder Women as Mothers:* But others *rebuke sharply, and with all Authority.* Rather choose to incur Mens Displeasure by your Freedom, than to suffer them to perish in Security and without Warning.

i Tim. v.
1, 2.
Tit. 1. 13.
— ii. 15.

VISIT the Sick. Deal freely with them about everlasting Matters, but with all possible Prudence. Get what Insight you can into their pass'd Life, and Course before you enter upon Particulars with them. If they have been careless, and minded nothing less than Religion, be not hasty in encouraging them to hope for Mercy upon any present Pangs; and yet drive them not to Despair. Set the Terms of Life and Death before them and leave it to them to judge for 'emselves as God shall incline and influence them. Exact Promises of them of a better Life hereafter by GOD's Assistance if He is pleas'd to spare them; and be their Remembrancers afterwards. If their Case appears to you hopeful, but they are apt to despond, propose the Promises of the Gospel to them, to encourage them. Put those that have injur'd others upon making their Acknowledgments, and Restitution too, if they are able. And if they recover, fail not to remind them, of the Sentiments they had, and the Impressions they were under, while the Hand of GOD was upon them.

THAT you may be the better able to go through all this Service, and the fitter for it, be still endeavouring to improve yourselves. *Give attendance to Reading* and close Thought, and strict Observation. Particularly study the. holy Scriptures, with great Application: And you'll find they have in them Stores of divine Knowledge that are not to be exhausted. Let other Parts of useful Knowledge be also apply'd to, in a Subserviency to your grand Design, which you have fix'd on for the Business of your Lives. Be much in Prayer, and let that season all your Studies, and attend and accompany all your Preparations for publick Service. Often and earnestly beg of Almighty GOD, a Blessing upon your Retirements. Direction in your publick Conduct, the Assistance of the good Spirit of Grace to the Whole of your Service, and in

i Tim. iv.
13.

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2 Tim. i.
6.

every Part of it, and such a warm Sense upon your own Hearts of those great Things you are to be dealing with others about, as may carry you through your Work with Comfort, and with Hope of Success. *Stir up the gift of God which is in you.* Don't let it languish or decay for want of Exercise. Stir it up by frequent converse with GOD and your own Hearts. and oft repeated spiritual Thoughts, and heavenly Aspirations; and nourish and cherish it, by continual Exercise in the holy Functions of your Office, and give your selves wholly to them, and your *Profiting will appear to all.*

1 Tim. iv.
15.

5. TAKE Heed of Snares and Temptations, which will on all hands surround you. Your Character and Office sets you in the Front, where you must expect to be peculiarly exposed, and first assaulted. Wonder not if the Devil sets himself particularly against you, who are by your Office bound to be all your Days fighting against him and his Interest Expect Difficulties ana Opposition from different Quarters, and prepare for it, accprdingly. Reckon upon going through bad Report as well as good Wonder not if you are sometimes ill-spoken of evcn for your Conscientiousness and Fidelity, and wounded by your very Friends. You are engag'd in a Warfare. not only as Christians, but as Ministers also; be careful to *war the good Warfare. Endure Hardness, as good Soldiers of Jesus Christ.* You have both the Power of Darkness, and the Works of the Flesh to fight against; and this requires no ordinary Measure, of Strength, Courage and Diligence. Prepare to bear Injuries and endure unjust Censure and Calumny, and to be neglecttd and ill treated, even by such is you have endeavour'd to serve, and oblige, and do good to. This at least has been the Lot of some, and may be yours. Arm your selves with Resolution, and look up to your Master whom you serve. Depend not upon your own Strength, but his Assistance. Be neither elevated and assuming, nor depress'd and discourag'd; but possess your Souls in Patience, and stand always upon your guard. Particularly beware of Contentiousness and Covetousness, to either of which if the Devil can tempt you, he'll strangely obstrust your Usefulness. *Be not soon angry; but carefully watch against it. Strive not about Words; whence comes Envy, Strife, Railings, evil Surmisings, and perverse Disputings,* which tend to *no Profit, but the subverting of the Hearers,* and produce

— i. 18.
2 Tim. ii.
8.Tit. i. 7.
1 Tim vi.
4.
2 Tim. iii.
14.

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produce Confusion, and all manner of Mischief. *Be not greedy of filthy Lucre.* There is hardly any Thing; so mean or unbecoming, base or horrid, but this may draw you into it, if you give way to it. Tit. i. 7.

6. AND *Lastly*, Take Care of Improving all the Helps that are afforded you, to the best Advantage. I'll grant you have your Discouragements, and that they are not small. You set out in a difficult Season. Real Religion is at a very low ebb among us. The Ministerial Office is much slighted. Many run down Christianity as meer Priestcraft, and Priests (as they call them) of all Sorts as the worst of People. And even they that it is, to be hop'd have a real Sense and Savour of the Things of GOD, have not I doubt that respect for our Office that they have sometimes had. And yet my Brethren be not dishearten'd but take Courage. Do you your Duty, and leave Events to GOD. That is a Course in which you may safely depend upon it, that He that employs you, will be with you always.

DON'T pore Continually upon the dark Side of Things, lest your Spirits should sink, and your Hearts faint; but think of the Encouragements and Helps that GOD has given you. You'll have indeed to do with People that won't be led blindfold; but I have that Opinion of your ingenuous Tempers, that I believe you are far from desiring it. Their Inquisitiveness, and Willingness to see with their own Eyes, (without which I can't see how they can rationally judge for themselves) will put you under a Necessity of searching Things to the Bottom, that you may be able to give them Satisfaction; But this in the issue will turn to your own Advantage, You have Liberty to act according to your Continences, which is more than those had who have gone before you, Instead of being frown'd on, you may be secure of the Protection, of the Government, which is no small Advantage. They that are true Friends of King GEORGE, can't certainly have the Face to be your Enemies, who have chcarfully taken the Oaths to him, pray heartily for Him, and his most Illustrious House, and are ready upon all Occasions to use your utmost Influence for his Service, without needing to be urg'd and press'd to it, or to have your Coldness, Remissness, and Neglects, cover'd or excus'd. This naturally tends to make you the more acceptable to such as have the Welfare of their Countrey truly at Heart. It is with-

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 al, very discernible, that the imposing Spirit is now-growing daily more and more out of Countenance. Men of Sense and Thought are weary of it, and ashamed of it too, and it seems almost spent. As the Papal Bulls have not now that force which they once had on the other Side the Water, so neither does the Opinion of Ecclesiastical Authority generally now run so high here at Home, as it did not long since. One terrible Scare-crow with which People have been frighten'd from coming near those of our Sentiments, or giving them a fair Hearings was an imaginary Schism, which the Zealots for the Establish'd Church, are now frightening One another with, till they scarce know who and who are together: And by this Means I think we may Hope, that some may in Time come to see the Weakness of their former Charges; and that they who truly Mean the Glory of GOD, and the Thriving of true Christianity, and the reaching at last the Heavenly Life, may at length be led into such a Train of Thoughts, as may Help to bring them to a better Temper, and so the Way may be pav'd for our better Knowing and Understanding one another. Such Things as these well consider'd, together with what they'll lead to, may I conceive encourage you to a chearful Application to the Service you are engag'd in, and then you may very safely trust GOD with the Sequel.

AND depend upon it, if you are but diligent and; faithful, your Reward will be great; 'twill be unspeakable: And you should set this against all your Difficulties. You'll this Way, both save your selves, and those that hear you. Many at the present may oppose and slight you, but at last you'll obtain a most glorious Prize. You'll reach eternal Life, and an advanc'd Degree of Blessedness in the other World. *Turning Men to Righteousness* by a faithful Discharge of the Duties of your Office, *you shall shine as the Stars for ever and ever: And when the Chief Shepherd shall appear, you shall receive a Crown of Glory that fadeth not away.*

DO but Act under the Influence of such Thoughts and Encouragements, and the Church of GOD will have great Reason to be Thankful for this Days Work; and both we that have acted as Instruments in it, and you that have so chearfully engag'd in such Service, may be able to look back upon it with great Comfort and Joy, and that both at the present, and in the Life to come: Which GOD of his infinite Mercy grant, through

Dan. xii.

2.

1 Pet. v.

4.

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through the Merits and Intercession of the Blessed JESUS, the Great Shepherd both of the Sheep and under Shepherds.

NOW unto him that is able to do exceeding abundantly above all that we ask or think, according to the Power that worketh in us; unto him be Glory in the Church by Christ Jesus throughout all Ages, World without end. Amen.

Eph. iii.
20, 23.



A Brief and True Account of the
PROTESTANT DISSENTERS in ENGLAND.

SIR,



IN compliance with your repeated Request, and my own Promise, I transmit the following Account, which you may (I think) depend on as faithful and impartial.

EVER since the first Reformation of this Land from Popery, there has been a Number of pious Persons of all Ranks, who have been desirous that the Worship and Government of the Church, might be more Agreeable to the holy Scriptures, and the Methods of other Protestant Churches: And they are still as desirous of it as ever, tho' they have not hitherto been able to obtain it. In the Days of King *Edward VI*, several of the Reformers own'd in their Writings, that they rather got what they could obtain, than fix'd Things, as they apprehended they should be; and they intended to go much farther in Conformity to Scripture, rather than design'd their Settlement for a Continuance: But the immature Death of that Excellent Prince, hinder'd the farther Reformation intended. Dr. *Peter Heylin* therefore declares, That he could not reckon that Prince's Death, an Infelicity to the *Church of England*.

THE Severities of Queen *Mary's* Reign drove our Learned Men in great Numbers beyond the Seas into *Germany*, where they were kindly receiv'd and entertain'd, but sadly divided among themselves.
Some

⁴⁰Some were fond of all the Particulars of King *Ed-
 mard's* Settlement, without allowing of any alterati-
 ons; while others were zealous for a more plain and
 serious Way of Worship, and a Method of Discipline
 that had a greater Aptness to smite the Purity of the
 Church and its Members.

WHEN they return'd Home in the Reign of
 Queen *Elizabeth*, that Party that was for Diocesan
 Prelacy, and the old Liturgy, and against any consi-
 derable Alterations either in Worship or Govern-
 ment, prevail'd, and were preferr'd, and had the
 Queen's Favour. The Other Party petition'd, and
 hop'd, and waited, but were discountenanc'd and re-
 buk'd, and by Law restrain'd. The discountenanc'd
 Party were fervent Preachers, and of holy Lives; and
 so were the first Bishops also of that Reign: But when
Jewel, Pilkington, Grindal, &c. were dead, they who
 succeeded them were of another Stamp, and grew
 fond of securing Uniformity by rigorous Methods.
 The silenc'd Disciplinarians did, by their Writings,
 secret Conferences, and Preaching, and their godly
 Lives, work much upon such as were inclin'd to se-
 rious Religion: But the Bishops and their Courts had
 the Power in their Hands, and sometimes made use
 of it in such Ways, as not a little exasperated the
 Sufferers.

IN the Reign of King *James I.*, the Clergy fawn'd
 upon that Prince, and engaging to advance his prero-
 gative, he in Return, made it his Business to con-
 firm and advance their Power. There was a Confe-
 rence between the two Parties appointed for Form's
 Sake, at *Hampton Court*, but without Effect. No Al-
 terations of any Moment could be obtain'd. The Ru-
 ling Clergy put Episcopacy, and the Liturgy, and
 Ceremonies together, into the Subscriptions which
 they impos'd on all that would be Ministers or School-
 Masters, and so call, and kept out, many worthy Men.
 Three hundred pious Ministers were at once silenc'd,
 suspended, and depriv'd, *An. 1603*: And many that
 conform'd, and took Pains to promote serious Piety,
 being uneasy under the Ceremonies, were stigmstiz'd
 as *Puritans*, and many Ways Discourag'd and Brow-
 beaten; while but little was done to check or dis-
 countenance Impiety and Irreligion.

IN the Reign of King *Charles I.* under the Influence
 of BP *Laud* the strict Use of the Ceremonies in every
 Punctilio was press'd to the utmost height, agd new
 Things

⁴¹ Things were introduc'd, a Conformity to which was insisted on with great Vehemence. Many were suspended for not reading in the publick Churches a Declaration, allowing all Manner of Sports and Pastimes on the Lord's-Day; and several were driven into *New England*, that they might there enjoy their Liberty, who could not at Home have Freedom to worship GOD according to their Consciences, without being many Ways molested. A Design of a Coalition with the *Gallican Church* was set on Foot; and the Prerogative was advanc'd to such an Height by many of the Clergy, as not a little endanger'd Liberty and Property: And an Oath to the Church Government that obtain'd, without any Alterations, was impos'd by the Convocation, without the Content of the Parliament: And Things were driven to that Extremity, that a general Confusion was the Consequence, which at last issu'd in the Overthrow of the Hierarchy, and the whole Ecclesiastical Constitution, notwithstanding that we are assur'd by the Lord *Clarendon*, * That at the Beginning of the Civil War, there were not more than Five in both Houses of Parliament, that were Enemies to the *Church of England*.

* *Hist. of the Rebellion*, Book III.

AT the *Restoration* of King Charles II. there were fair Promises, and great Hopes of more Lenity, and an Accommodation: But it appear'd at a Conference held at the *Savoy*, by Virtue of a Royal Commission, *An. 1661*, that the Spirits of the ruling Clergy were too much heated; for no Abatements could be obtain'd, and a most moving Petition for Peace was made light of. A Law pass'd in 1662, that made Conformity to the Ecclesiastical Establishment in some Respects heavier than before. Above Two Thousand Ministers † were ejected the publick Churches, tho' generally Men of good Worth, and valuable Abilities. Many of the People adhering to them, and valuing their Labours, which they had found profitable and advantageous, met privately for Worship, in separate Assemblies; upon which, severe Laws were made both against Ministers and People, to restrain and punish them: And they were executed with great Rigor, (excepting that now and then a little shortliv'd Indulgence, or breathing time was granted them; and that rather by Connivance, than any just Authority) till the Nation grew pretty generally sensible, that there was no small Danger of a common Ruin from the *Papist*.

† *A distinct Account of them may be seen in the ad Vol. of the Abridgment of Mr. Baxter's Life.*

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THIS was so plain in the Reign of King *James II.* that the Clergy who had been so vehement in using Rigor to promote Uniformity, profess'd to see their Error and be ready to make Abatements, and lay aside Bigotry and Persecution, and come to a Temper towards them, and treat them as Brethren.

BUT after the *Revolution*, under King *William*, of Glorious Memory, they too generally forgot their Promises in the Time of their Distress and Fear, and tho' they were earnestly press'd by that Prince and his Royal Consort, (they being both of them zealous to promote an Union which had long been desir'd) would yield to no Alterations. The Parliament gave Liberty to all that were not satisfy'd to fall in with the *Church of England*, (provided they own'd the Doctrine of the Trinity, as they of whom I am giving here an Account did, and do universally) to act according to their Consciences in Matters of Religion; the Benefits of which Law they still enjoy.

IN the Reign of Queen *Anne*, tho' the Dissenters were as firm in the Principles upon which King *William's* Revolution was bottom'd, and as zealous for the Protestant Succession in the Illustrious House of *Hanover* as any Men whatsoever, they yet were so unkindly us'd, as to be by Law incapacitated from holding any Place of Profit or Trust under the Government; tho' at the same Time they are not only expos'd to such Offices as are chargeable in common with others, but continu'd liable to severe Pecuniary Mulcts, for not serving some Offices, which yet the Law leaves them in no Capacity of serving. They have also been by Law deny'd the Liberty of Educating their own Children, than which, they could not well have been expos'd to a greater Hardship, or been brought under a more disheartening Mark of Distinction.

FOR their Objections against the Terms of Conformity requir'd by Law, I shall refer to the Learned Mr. *Hickman's Apologia pro Ministris in Anglia vulgò Nonconformistis*, printed in 1664. And their Pleas against the Hierarchy and Ecclesiastical Constitution, are open'd at large, and strenuously inforc'd, in a Book printed long since, call'd *Altare Damascenum*, which was reprinted in *Quarto at Leyden, An. 1708*. And their Vindication of themselves from the Charges that are brought against them, may be found in *Vindiciæ Fratrum Dissidentium in Anglia: Auctore jacobo Piercio, 8^o. Lond. 1710*: Which three Books I therefore mention

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to you, that I may not trouble you with the Titles of the many Tracts and Volumes that are written in our own Language upon the same Subjects.

THEIR common Principles may be consider'd, either with Respect to the Civil Government or in Reference to Religion.

AS to Civil Government; They thankfully own, it an Ordinance of Almighty GOD, the Good of Mankind. They readily acknowledge a conscientious Subjection to the Government they live under (be it in one Form or another) to be the Duty of all Christians: and pay such a Deference to the Magistrate, even in Ecclesiastical Matters, as to be ready to give him Satisfaction, that they take no Methods that are destrusive to the Civil Peace. Nor have they any Notions opposite to Absolute Passive Obedience and Nonresistance, but such as are common to them with the best Friends both to the Government of King *William*, and the Protestant Succession.

AS to Religion; They agree in making the Holy Scriptures the Standard of Faith, Worship, and Discipline; disowning any Power of Men, under any Pretence whatever, of framing or imposing any new Articles of Faith, or new Modes of Worship, or of making any Settlements as to the Government of the Church, to the Detriment of that Purity in Worshipping Assemblies and their several Members, which all in their respective Stations are by the Gospel Rule bound to be studious to promote and secure. That GOD has appointed Government in his Church, they freely own: And it is an Opinion that prevails much among them, That no one particular Form of Church Government is of Right Divine: But its being manag'd by more or fewer Persons, with more or less of Superiority and Subordination, they look upon as comparatively indifferent, so that the End, which is Christian Purity, be but subserv'd. And such Friends are they to that Christian Charity upon which the Writings of the *New Testament* lay so great a Stress, that while those of the Establish'd Church are generally for confining their Communion to such as are of their own Way only, a Number of the Dissenters have from the first, (tho' they declar'd they foresaw the Disservice it would do to their particular Interest) own'd themselves free for *Occasional Conformity* with Christians of all Forms, who agree in the Essentials of Religion, in Testimony of their esteeming them Brethren, notwithstanding their Differences in lesser Matters.

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IN the mean Time, there are some things in which they differ among themselves. For some of them are most desirous of the Presbyterian Form of Church Government, as it is Legally Establish'd in *North Britain*: Others are rather for the Congregational Form of Government, by each Worshipping Assembly within itself, having no other Reference to Classes or Synods, than for Advice in Cases of Need, according to the Way which obtains in *New England*: Others are rather for a Superintendency for Life, (unless great Irregularities should prohibit) over all the Pastors and Churches, divided into larger or smaller Districts, according to Convenience: And there are yet others, who think a Mixture of the Episcopal, Presbyterian, and Congregational Method together, might best answer the End, and most effectually secure Unity and Peace. And the Number of this latter Sort seems to grow and increase. There are some also who have particular Sentiments as to the Subjects and Mode of Baptism. They are for deferring it, till People are of Age to receive Instruction, and personally give their Consent to the Christian Covenant; and for Baptizing by Plunging, while in other Things they differ not from their Brethren.

BUT notwithstanding these, and some other such Differences among themselves, they generally agree in the Doctrinal Articles of the *Church of England*, (which they subscribe) the Confession of Faith, and larger and smaller Catechisms compil'd by the Assembly of Divines at *Westminster*, and the Judgment of the *British* Divines at the Synod of *Dort*, about the *Quinquarticular Controversies*.

THEIR Number is far from being inconsiderable; They have above an Hundred several Places of Worship, (larger and smaller) in and about the Cities of *London* and *Westminster*, and Burrough of *Southwark*: And in other Cities and Corporations, and trading Parts of the Kingdom, their Number is proportionable.

THEY are deny'd the Advantage of educating their Youth either at *Oxford* or *Cambridge*, by Oaths and Subscriptions that are impos'd: And therefore besides private Seminaries, where Philosophical and Theological Lectures are read, they send their Children to *North Britain* and *Holland* for Academic Education.

THEY are zealous for a Learned Ministry. And therefore after several Years spent in preparatory Studies

⁴⁵ dies, young Men are carefully examin'd amongst them, before they are allow'd to enter upon Preaching in publick: And upon their being in time call'd to take the Pastoral Charge of any Christian Society, or after they have continu'd so long Candidates, as to have Evidence of the Acceptableness of their Gifts, and to be able with Freedom to make choice of the Ministry for the Employment of their Lives, they are solemnly ordain'd, by Fasting, and Prayer, and Imposition of Hands, after making a publick Confession of that Faith, in which they ingage to make it their Business to instruct others. And this Examination and Ordination, is manag'd according to the Rules laid down in the *Directory* publish'd by the *Westminster* Assembly, about the Year 1644, which also gives Direction about the several Parcs of publick Worship, which are generally approv'd among us.

THEIR Ministers meet together for Consultation about Matters of common Concernment, in greater or smaller Numbers, as Occasions require. In such Meetings, without pretending to exercise Authority, they give their Judgment in such Matters as come before them, or are referr'd to them: And they keep up a Correspondence with their Brethren in *Britain*, and in *Ireland*, and in the *American* Plantations, in all which Places the Number of those that are of the same Sentiments with them, are very considerable.

THEIR dated publick Worship on the Lord's-Days (which they conscientiously devote wholly to religious Purposes) is thus manag'd. The Minister in each Christian Society, offers up to Almighty God the common Requests of the whole Society, in the aptest and most Scriptural Expressions he is able. He publishes the Will of GOD both as to Truth and Duty in two distinct Discourses each Lord's-Day, the one in the Forenoon, and the other in the Afternoon, Each Sermon is of about an Hour's Length, and begun and clos'd with Prayer. The *Psalms* are sung in *Metre* by the whole Assembly. In some Congregations there are Evening Lectures besides the foremention'd Forenoon and Afternoon Sermons. In some, the Youth are Catechiz'd on the Afternoons of the Lord's-Days, in others on the Evenings, and in others on some Week Day. Some Ministers use the Lord's-Prayer constantly, others frequently, others seldom or never; as reckoning it rather given for a *Directory*, than to be us'd as a Form. Some Ministers besides their stated

⁴⁶ted Preachings do ordinarily Expound a Chapter, or some lesser Portion of Scripture, at the beginning of the Morning Service, while others only read two or three Chapters, or a Psalm and a Chapter. In these and some other Things, several Ministers and Christian Societies act variously, and as they are most inclin'd: Which Diversity of Practise creates no difference in Affection, among persons of Understanding.

THE Sacrament of Baptism is administred among them in the publick Congregation, where it is desir'd, or Persons can be prevail'd with to yield to it; which is not so usually as were to be wilh'd, private Baptisms having by Custom much prevail'd among Dissenters, as well as in the Establish'd Church. In the Administration of this Ordinance, they give a brief Explicate on of the Nature and Grounds of it, and offer up a suitable Prayer. An explicit Consent to the Apostles Creed, or some other short summary of the Christian Covenant, is requir'd either of the Parties baptiz'd, or their Parents, if they are Infants: And then Water is poured in the *Name of the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost*, without any signing with the Cross, or any other Addition, saving a Charge to the Parties baptized about an Holy Life, or to their Parents about their Education, &c; and a Serious Thanksgiving to Almighty GOD, for his rich Mercy and Grace to sinful Man, through Jesus Christ his Son: And they baptize them not into a Party, but into Christiamty, as it is deliver'd in the Holy Scriptures.

THE other Sacrament of the *Eucharist* is ordinarily administred amongst them once a Month. Their Administration of it consists in Breaking of Bread, and pouring out the Wine, and distributing these Elements among the Communicants, after reading the Account of our Blessed Saviour's Institution of that Solemnity, either out of one of the Evangelists, or out of St. *Paul's* first Epistle to the *Corinthians*; and a Serious and Devout imploring the Blessing of the Great Master of the Feast. During the Time of Receiving, the Minister usually endeavours to stir up the Devotion of the Communicants by some suitable Suggestions and after Participation closes with some serious Admonitions tending to excite to Holiness of Life; and with Affectionate Thanksgivings and Praises to GOD, for his rich Mercy and Grace, and tinging a Psalm or Hymn. This Sacrament is by some administred in the Evening, but by most at Noon. The Communicants are at Liberty to use their own
Posture

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Posture in the Time of Receiving, tho' a Table gesture is most commonly us'd, in Conformity (as is apprehended) to the Practise of our Saviour and His Apoptles.

IT is commonly press'd upon all baptiz'd Persons, if they stand to their Baptismal Covenant, to come to the Communion publickly, to testify as much, when they arrive at Years of Discretion. Conversation with the Pastor of each Christian Society is expected before the first Communicating, that Satisfaction may be given that such as come to partake of the Holy *Eucharist*, do understand the Nature of their Baptismal Obligation, and are willing to stand to it, and are also sufficiently acquainted with the Nature and Design of the Lord's Supper. The Names of such as desire to join in stated Communion with any Christian Society, are ordinarily first mention'd amongst them, sometime before their Admission, that so if any Thing unsuitable to a Christian Profession be known in the Life or Conversation of such as offer themselves, notice may be given, that they may be kept from the Communion, till they have given Satisfaction as to their Regularity and Sobriety. And if any that are Communicants fall into any scandalous Practices, which are well attested, they are in a Brotherly manner Admonish'd, and suspended from Communion, till such Time as they are Reformed, when they are readily again received.

COLLECTIONS are made for the Poor, at the Close of every Communion, and often at other Times of publick Worship; and what is collected, is distributed among such as are in Want, by some that are deputed for that Purpose.

THEIR Ministers are supported by the voluntary Contributions of their People, and so are maintain'd more liberally, or more sparingly, according to the Ability and Affection of their respective Flocks. They visit their People in Time of Sickness or Distress, without expecting Gratuities for their Pains. They pray with them, exhort, and admonish them, according to their Circumstances, when they are under Affliction, or observe their End approaches. They endeavour at such Times to deal with them very closely and faithfully, that they may assist them in building their Hopes upon right scriprural Foundations; but are fearful of encouraging People to look upon the Eucharist as a *Viaticum*, or certain Pass-port to Heaven, by administring it to the Sick, *in articula mortis*.

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THE Body of the Dissenters look upon themselves to have as clear and full a Right to choose their own Pastors to take Care of their Souls, as their Physicians to take care of their bodies, or their Lawyers to mind their Estates: And therefore they choose their own Ministers within such a Compass, as that they can attend upon their Labours with Convenience, without insisting upon any Limitation not to attend upon others as there may be Occasion, or as may be found to be advantageous.

WHEN Ministers prove scandalous, their People look upon themselves as at Liberty to desert them, and the neighbouring Ministers taking Cognizance of such Matters, are ready to admonish them so to do, and to encourage them in it if there be no Reformation, or if the Scandals were of such a Nature, as not to be repair'd without a remaining Blemish to the sacred Ministry.

DAYS of Fasting and Prayer, and also of Thanksgiving, are readily Observ'd amongst them, upon the Call of Authority; or upon any particular Emergencies, at their own voluntary Motion, when they apprehend any religious Purposes may be thereby serv'd.

THEY joyfully own the Ministry of all the Protestant Churches, of whatever Denomination, and loose upon their Members as their Brethren. They embrace not only *Lutherans* and *Calvinists* but all others that hold the Essentials of Christianity with a Brotherly Affection. They are ready to hold Communion with them as Opportunity shall offer, in Token of their Brotherly Love. And they earnestly long and pray for the Time, when Heats upon the Account of lesser Matters being laid aside, it may be hop'd there will be a stricter Union, and a stronger Affection among all that love the Lord Jesus Christ in Sincerity, and are desirous of the Common Salvation.

BESIDES those above-mention'd, there is a Party of Dissenters who are call'd *Quakers*, who are considerable, numerous, well-compacted Body of People, who very much confine their Dealings to those of their own Sortment, and have their stated yearly Meetings from all Parts: But I am not so well-acquainted with them, as to be able to give a just Account of their Principles or Practises. If there be any Thing else in which I am capable of serving you, you may freely command,

SIR, *Your Affectionate Brother and humble Servant,*

E. C.